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Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report

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23 August 1983

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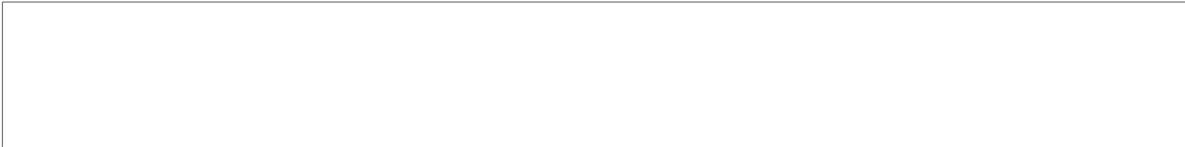
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Soviet and Afghan officials are investigating widespread reports of the Afghan Army's low morale and readiness, defections, and collaboration with insurgents. 

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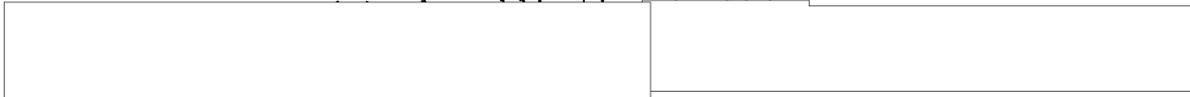
Fighting intensified in July, with the insurgents successfully attacking regime convoys in several areas and seriously disrupting security in several major cities and towns; political divisions, meanwhile, continued to trouble both the Afghan Communist Party and resistance organizations. 

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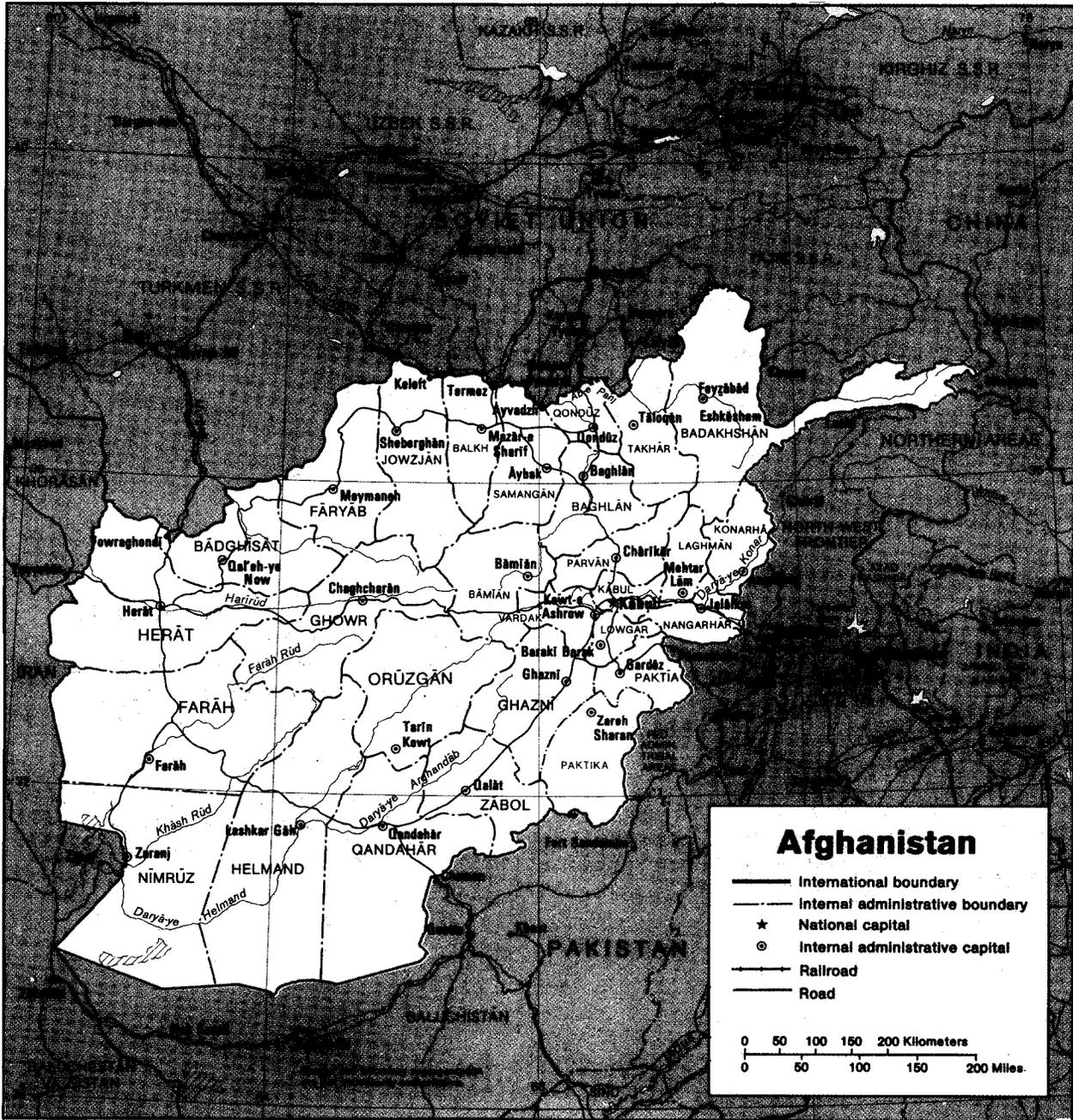
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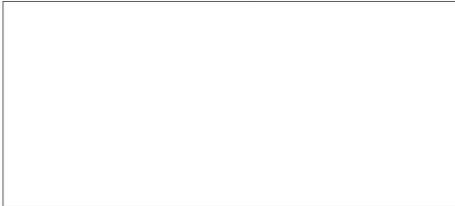
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SOVIETS AND AFGHANS ASSESSING AFGHAN ARMY PROBLEMS 

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 on 1 August groups of high-ranking Afghan Ministry of Defense officers and Soviet advisers began to visit each Afghan Army division to assess reports of low morale and readiness, defections, and collaboration with the insurgents. 

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 in mid-August a Ministry of Defense official stated that Army manpower and morale was at its weakest state ever. Discipline continues to deteriorate, and even officers are becoming disobedient and refusing to report for some duties. The Ministry of Defense,  has recalled some reservists in the hope that these troops will increase manpower and be more disciplined. 

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Comment: The Ministry of Defense commissions are unlikely to come up with any quick solution to the fundamental problem facing the Afghan Armed forces--lack of will to fight the insurgents for



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the Karmal regime and the Soviets. Many of the reservists probably will not respond to the government's recall. Forcing reservists to rejoin the Army probably will worsen the desertion and morale problems the government hopes to improve.



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IN BRIEF

-- [redacted] UN Special Mediator Cordovez has postponed his September trip to Kabul, Islamabad, Tehran, and Moscow, alleging no side is ready to compromise.



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-- Fundamentalist alliance leader Sayyaf has told journalists in Islamabad that "we will kill" former King Zahir Shah "as soon as he sets foot on Afghan soil." In response to rumors of the King's return, Sayyaf charged that moderate resistance leaders want to come to power under Zahir's shadow.



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-- A German emigre from Soviet Central Asia says that non-Muslim nationalities there are generally supportive of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, but Soviet Muslims--particularly before Andropov's accession to the leadership--have been openly supportive of the Afghan rebels. Since Andropov's takeover people have become more cautious in expressing their views because of their fear he will be more effective in crushing dissent.



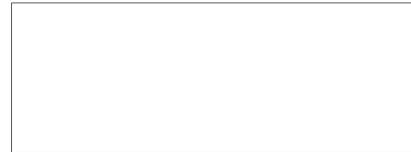
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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN IN JULY 

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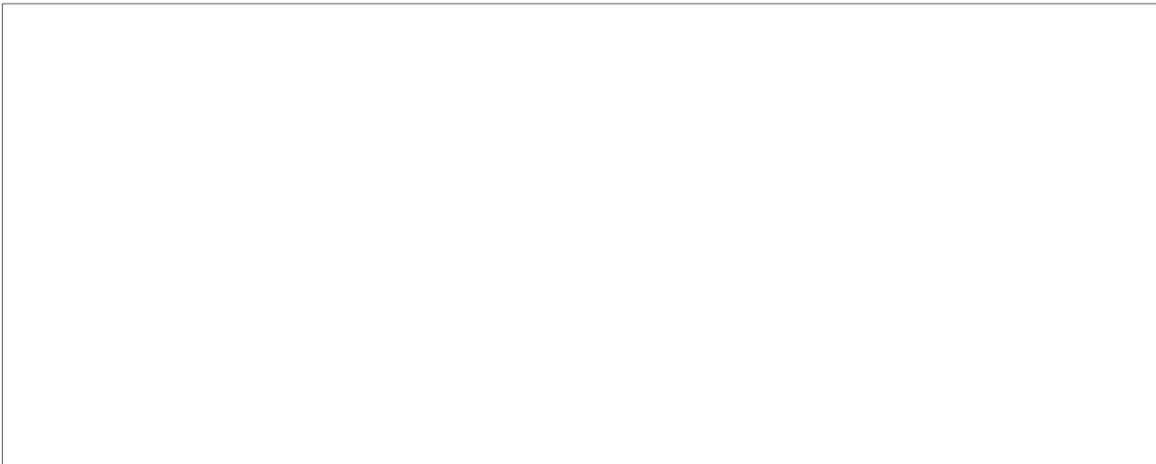
Fighting throughout Afghanistan intensified in July, compared to May and June. With the aid of their intelligence networks, the insurgents were generally able to avoid large Soviet-Afghan operations, and they successfully attacked regime convoys in several areas and seriously disrupted security in several major cities and towns. Political divisions, meanwhile, continued to trouble both the Afghan Communist Party and Afghan resistance organizations. 



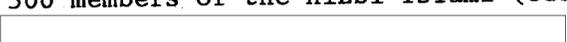
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Military Developments



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Nevertheless,  during July 110 insurgents from Qonduz and Herat Provinces came over to the regime, as did about 500 members of the Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) faction in Parvan Province.  moreover,  the regime is making strenuous efforts to mobilize civilians in Paktia and to win the support of tribal chiefs, with grants of money and arms. 

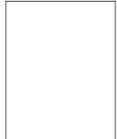


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Panjsher Cease-Fire. The fragility of the Panjsher cease-fire became evident in July. Embassy sources, who report that the Soviets have sought a two-month extension of the cease-fire, also said that Masood



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ordered the small contingent of regime troops and Soviet advisers out of the valley in early July. [REDACTED]

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Kabul Area. Insurgents maintained a high level of activity in the capital throughout the month, dramatically showing their power by attacking the airport and security outposts around the city, as well as disrupting the electrical supply, bombing government installations, and continuing to assassinate party officials and suspected secret police informers, [REDACTED]. The Embassy reported that tightened security measures during the Id al-Fitr holidays in mid-July brought relative calm, but by late July the insurgents had again increased operations despite additional searchlights, increased security patrols, and more government troops. [REDACTED]

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In the Shomali and Paghman areas north of Kabul, the Soviet and regime offensive on the insurgents concluded late in the month, with the regime announcing that the area had again been pacified, according to Embassy reports. The insurgents, however, appeared to remain as strong as ever and to hold the same areas that they had held prior to the offensive. [REDACTED] the offensive was occasioned by reports of Masood sending weapons and possibly fighters to Paghman. Bombing and heavy fighting caused only light resistance casualties because the insurgents had received warning of the operation, and attacks on regime convoys continued. [REDACTED]

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In the Lowgar Valley, south of the capital, insurgents continued successful attacks on regime convoys. A three-day joint Soviet-regime operation in the Lowgar, which featured airborne troops, had little success because the insurgents once again were forewarned and vacated the area until the ground forces withdrew, according to Embassy reports. The insurgents were thus able to continue pressure on Soviet and regime efforts to resupply their forces in Paktia and Paktika Provinces, where insurgent activity also remained intense, [REDACTED]

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The South. Ghazni Province in July was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war, [REDACTED]. A Soviet-Afghan multibattalion operation in early and mid-July brought little success, with the insurgents again having been forewarned.

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[Redacted]

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Soviet reprisals were unusually harsh, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Qandahar. The Afghan Ministry of Defense judged that the situation in Qandahar Province was growing worse daily and reported that more than 20 Soviets were killed in a large firefight with insurgents. Joint Soviet-Afghan operations again were unsuccessful owing to the insurgents' having advance notice, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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The North. [Redacted]

[Redacted] Embassy sources report that insurgent action and Soviet/regime retaliation in Balkh Province were at a high level. In Mazar-e Sharif, night fighting was more intense than in Kabul, and there were several daylight assassinations of party members within the city. Embassy sources indicate that security in other northern towns and cities is similar to that in Mazar-e Sharif.

[Redacted]

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The East. Government forces in the eastern provinces were outnumbered two to one by the insurgents, according to Afghan Ministry of Defense information, and the military leader in the region requested an additional division for deployment in Laghman Province. Soviet airstrikes were a daily occurrence in Nangarhar Province, and the civilian death toll rose significantly because of sweep operations, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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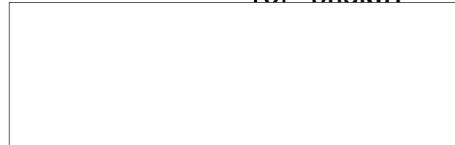
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Political Developments

Party Plenum. President Babrak's address on the 12th Afghan Communist Party plenum on 4 July reflected continuing factionalism within the party, Embassy and press reports indicated. Blaming disunity on such factors as tribalism, ambition, and favoritism, Babrak avoided discussing the Parcham-Khalq feud explicitly. The plenum concluded with no announcement of changes in the regime Cabinet. [redacted]

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[redacted] factionalism deepened following the plenum as a result of changes in Central Committee membership. The proportion of Khalqis now on the Politburo and in the Central Committee has been reduced to about 25 percent, heightening resentment on the part of the Khalqis, many of whom now covertly help the insurgents. [redacted]

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Resistance Unity. Prospects for resistance unity continued to remain distant. Although former Afghan King Zahir Shah indicated that he plans to participate in a conference to forge unity among the various Afghan resistance groups, according to an Afghan exile source, opposition to Zahir among fundamentalists remains strong. [redacted]

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[redacted] in Peshawar, meanwhile, the alliance of fundamentalist insurgent groups is threatened by a rift between alliance leader Sayyaf and Hizbi Islami faction leader Gulbuddin. Moreover, moderate resistance leaders are attempting to exploit the situation to strengthen their own numbers. [redacted]

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Economic Developments

Additional Soviet economic assistance to Afghanistan was announced in July. The Kabul press reported that Soviet and Afghan officials concluded protocols on a Soviet grant-in-aid of 175 million rubles for consumer goods, on the postponement of debt repayment to the USSR for another 10 years, and on the extension of the service period of about 100 Soviet advisers in the Afghan Government. [redacted]

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Southwestern Afghanistan. As of late July, the economy in Qandahar and Helmand Provinces remained "extremely disrupted," [redacted] Agricultural output was declining because of a labor shortage and widespread damage to irrigation canals caused by the war. Villagers, however, generally continued to support the insurgents, but the insurgents expect the mood of the civilians to change as their share of their own produce continues to decline. [redacted]

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